

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 232607

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEAN

SUBJECT: US-ASEAN ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS

REF: 1) BANGKOK 19290; JAKARTA 11206; 3) MANILA 12848;
4) JAKARTA 11071; 5) JAKARTA 10807; 6) SINGAPORE 4127

1. REFTELS AND OTHER RECENT COMMUNICETIONS SUGGEST THAT
WE CLARIFY OUR PRESENT THINKING ON A NUMBER OF POINTS
RAISED BY VARIOUS OFFICIALS IN ASEAN COUNTRIES. ADDRESSEE
POSTS MAY FEEL FREE TO CONVEY THESE THOUGHTS TO APPROPRIATE
OFFICIALS ON APPROPRIATE OCCASIONS.

2. FOR ABOUT A YEAR USG THOUGHT THAT ECONOMIC CONSULTA-
TIONS WITH ASEAN WOULD BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL AS A MEANS
TO INTENSIFY ECONOMIC RELATIONS, DISCUSS ECONOMIC
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POLICIES AND POLICY ISSUES WITH A VIEW OF GAINING BETTER

UNDERSTANDING AND TO EXTEND, ADAPT AND MODIFY POLICIES FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT. WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY OBSERVED THAT BOTH EEC AND JAPAN HAVE HELD CONSULTATIONS WITH ASEAN AND WE THOUGHT THAT ASEAN MIGHT ALSO BE INTERESTED IN HAVING DIALOGUE WITH US.

3. WE REALIZED THAT POLITICALLY ASEAN MAY VIEW US IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT THAN THEY HAVE VIEWED EITHER THE EEC OR

JAPAN. IT WAS ESSENTIALLY IN ORDER NOT TO OFFEND ASEAN'S SENSITIV TY THAT WE THOUGHT TO APPROACH ASEAN IN A LOW KEY AND TO PERMIT THEM TO TAKE INITIATIVE IF THEY SO WISH.

4. WE ALSO THOUGHT THAT OUR SITUATION AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH REGION ARE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT THAN THAT OF EITHER THE EEC OR JAPAN AND THEREFORE THE NATURE OF THE TALKS WE ENVISAGED MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT AND MORE COMPREHENSIVE THAN THE CONSULTATIONS WITH ASEAN CARRIED OUT WITH BOTH THOSE ENTITIES.

5. WE REGRETTED THAT THE LAST MINUTE INSERTION OF THE OPEC CLAUSE IN THE GSP PROVISIONS OF THE TRADE ACT MADE THE CONSULTATIONS APPEAR INOPPORTUNE TO INDONESIA AT THE TIME WE MADE THE APPROACH. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT ASEAN IS AN EVOLVING ORGANIZATION WHICH HAS A SLOW AND SOMEWHAT CUMBERSOME COORDINATING MECHANISM. THEREFORE WE ARE QUITE WILLING TO BE PATIENT. WE CERTAINLY DO NOT WISH TO PUT PRESSURE ON ASEAN OR ANY OF ITS MEMBERS IF

THEY DO NOT FEEL THAT TIME HAS YET COME TO HAVE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE US.

6. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE DO NOT WISH TO BE PUT IN A POSITION WHERE WE APPEAR TO BE BEGGING NOR DO WE THINK THAT WE DESERVE CRITICISM FOR OUR APPROACH EITHER ON PROCEDURAL OR SUBSTANTIVE GROUNDS.

7. QUESTION OF WHO ISSUES INVITATION IS OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE TO US. WE WOULD HAVE ASSUMED THAT ASEAN WOULD WISH TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND WE WANTED ASEAN TO CONFIDENTIAL

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KNOW THAT WE WOULD ACCEPT SUCH INVITATION. IF FOR SOME REASON ASEAN FEELS THAT THE INVITATION SHOULD COME FROM US, WE WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM TO ISSUE SUCH INVITATION IF IT WERE CLEAR BEFOREHAND THAT ASEAN WOULD RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY.

8. REGARDING AN AGENDA OF SUCH TALKS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY INDICATED OUR DESIRE TO BE FLEXIBLE. WE REALIZE THAT

ASEAN COOPERATION AND COORDINATION HAVE PROGRESSED IN CERTAIN FIELDS FURTHER THAN IN CERTAIN OTHER AREAS. PLACING SOME TOPICS ON THE AGENDA MAY CREATE PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF ASEAN COORDINATION AND REPRESENTATION. IF TRADE ISSUES WERE THE EASIEST FOR ASEAN TO DEAL WITH, FOR THE TIME BEING WE WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH FOCUSING THE AGENDA ON THOSE QUESTIONS. WE DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH ISSUES SHOULD NOT BE NARROWLY DEFINED AND IT SEEMS TO US THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DESIRABLE TO BOTH PARTIES IF THESE CONSULTATIONS COULD SERVE AS A FOLLOW-UP

TO THE PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE SECRETARY'S SPECIAL SESSION SVEENH OF SEPTEMBER WQM AFTER ALL, MANY OF THOSE ISSUES AND PROPOSALS ARE CLOSELY INTERRELATED, I.E. TRADE, COMMODITIES, COMPENSATORY FINANCING AND ASEAN COUNTRIES HAVE A MAJOR INTEREST IN MOST OF THESE PROPOSALS.

9. REGARDING QUESTION OF AID, NEITHER JAPAN NOR THE EEC HAVE FOCUSED ON AID IN THEIR CONSULTATIONS. AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND CANADA HAVE APPROACHED ASEAN WITH AID OFFERS BUT THESE APPROACHES SEEM TO BE OF RELATIVELY RECENT DATE. WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY INDICATED THAT IN OUR CONSULTATIONS WITH ASEAN WE WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS ON ISSUES OTHER THAN AID. IF, HOWEVER, ASEAN WOULD WISH TO TALK ABOUT AID WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO REVIEW OUR GENERAL EAST ASIAN FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AS AN ELEMENT OF OUR CONSULTATIONS. WE WOULD NOT WISH, HOWEVER, TO HAVE A US AID COMMITMENT TO ASEAN MADE A PRECONDITION TO CONSULTATIVE TALKS.

1;. XIT IS BASICALLY UP TO ASEAN AND ITS MEMBERS SO DECIDE WHETHER THEY WISH TO ENGAGE IN CONSULTATIONS WITH
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US, AND WE DO NOT AT PRESENT TIME PLAN TO TAKE ANY NEW INITIATIVES. INGERSOLL

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